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POLITICAL PARTIES. By Robert Michels. Translated from the Italian by E. and C. Paul. London: Jarrold and Sons. Price, 12s. 6d. net.

The central idea of this book is that every group of men tends to produce a smaller "aristocratic" clique of leaders or governors. This is shown to be the case in the most modern political parties, in which the admitted principles are such as are usually called democratic. Evidence is given most fully, and the details are often of the greatest interest. The writer appears to be in closer touch with the German democratic movement than with any other; and in that movement the tendency to segregate "leaders" seems to be most obvious. Interesting and important discussions follow of the contest between old and new leaders and of the production of a bureaucracy. The natural desire to idealise some person or to live in an atmosphere of social myth, along with the effects of modern organization, are studied as causes of the same phenomena. All attempts to restrict the tendency to oligarchy, as the evidence goes to show, are doomed to failure; for a party or group of perfectly equal members could not act effectively. The facts referred to are important and the general thesis is undeniable. In fact Professor Michels has simply given us the scientific proof of a social theory divined by Renan and more recently sketched by Emile Faguet. The danger to political equality is obvious; and there are in the struggle for leadership, many possibilities of corruption, arising chiefly from the infinite gullibility of man if only fine words are used. But Professor Michels appears to think that there is something destructive of democracy in this tendency to elevate the few. We shall not quarrel about words. But democracy should not necessarily mean a dead level in the political or social value of all individuals. For indeed Ritchie said very well that democracy was only an hypothesis that all men are equal, made for discovering who are the best. The sane and progressive production of exceptional political genius and the elevation of that genius to power is essential to true democracy, or at least to that form of organisation in which the political rights of all sane adults are recognised. Unfortunately, even moderately "popular" government is so new in Europe that quite normal and healthy tendencies of public opinion are insufficiently distinguished from the barren enthusiasm of the mob and the infantile admirations of journalists. This criticism, however, must not be held to minimise the value

of Professor Michels' book. Indeed, it is a book of which the importance lies in the evidence collected and the general truth of its thesis. We criticise its implied conceptions of progressive political organisation only because it is so easy for the obsolete and the obscurantists to shake men's faith in new systems because they are not perfect: and we can foresee exactly the same evidence and the same general thesis being used to support a most sinister reaction.

C. DELISLE BURNS.

London, England.

THE CROWD IN PEACE AND WAR. By Sir Martin Conway.
London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1915. Pp. 332.
Price, 6s. net.

The instability and the vagaries of the "blind multitude"—the crowd—have from time immemorial served as a mark for the satirist; *quand les hommes s'attroupent leurs oreilles s'allongent*. Sir Martin Conway, the rest of whose works on the fly leaf, ranging from art to Alpine climbing, hardly seem to promise an excursion into crowd psychology—has written an interesting rather than profound study of the crowd and its problems, and his analysis of the behaviour of the crowd, based rather on his own observations than on the researches of psychologists, is singularly fresh.

The crowd has emotions, but no intellect, and must accept or reject opinions *en bloc*. It thinks, if it thinks at all, by "infection." Instead of being Shakespeare's "many-headed beast," it is all heart. Its singularity is its corporate and tyrannical life, which is distinct from the individual life of the units composing it.

The crowd resents individualism. Its business is to change free units into crowd-cells. It resents freedom of speech in any sense opposed to its own views. So the churches (which, as Sir Martin Conway puts it, are like the House of Lords or the village cricket club, but an organised crowd) are and have been intolerant. "In no category of human crowdship is it so easy to start a new group, first as a subdivision of an older crowd, frequently as an independent body. Thus every church is always in fear of innovations; intolerance, therefore, that is to say, hatred of any